

**Devon Association of Governors
DAG Conference 2008 “Tomorrows’ Schools”
Exeter – 29 March 2008**

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WORKSHOP

Conducted by:

Anne Porter (CYPS SEN Senior Officer)

Elsbeth Goodwin (SENCO Alphington PS)

Alison Wakeham – (SEN Governor Alphington PS)

20 Governors attended the workshop

Anne welcomed the opportunity to speak to governors at the conference. Governors were given 5 minutes to discuss their knowledge of SEN in their schools and their engagement with the SEN co-coordinator.

The LA has produced a SEN framework in an attempt to bring consistency throughout the county. The framework holds all the information of SEN needs in one document.

The information provided is able to assist in the allocation of funding, helpful when working with other agencies is useful for plotting trends across the county, supports applications for statements of special educational needs and identifies training needs for schools and county.

The LA sent a letter and guidance to all schools giving a full explanation of the framework along with hard copies of the framework for schools to complete. These are also available on the LA website. The LA has also offered training and support to learning communities and schools. Currently only 40% of schools in Devon LA have returned completed forms, which are not statutory at the moment. Anne was asked if a letter could be sent to governing bodies to encourage their schools to complete the framework. Elspeth suggested also prompting Governors to give SENCOs dedicated non-contact time in order to complete this task.

The first three forms of the framework identify pupils who are School Action, School Action Plus and pupils with the a Statement of Special Education Need. Form four is for collecting information on other issues such as children in care. The information on these forms is very useful as it gives a clear overview of the SEN situation, resulting in better management of resources and training.

The framework also includes information on pre-admission and transitional provision (provision map), a summary of SEN resources and outcomes for children providing a link between needs and resources and training. The framework also allows schools to judge their costs against the notional 5% received.

Elsbeth explained that the framework took a few days to complete but once completed it gave an invaluable overview of SEN within the school and made her work much easier. The year in and year out additions would take much less time. Anne explained that the format of the framework was not rigid, and where schools already had the same information represented in other ways they should simply add this to the document. The majority of schools have teaching SENCOs and it is therefore difficult for them to allocate time to complete the framework. It was suggested that schools allow supply cover for this purpose.

The government is looking at applying a toolkit for schools and it is possible that completion of this may become statutory, although there may be provision for LAs to use their own frameworks.

David Tall thanked Anne, Elspeth and Alison for the very informative presentation.